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FORECAST

TODAY SUN MON
55°/42° 63°/57° 72°/61°
Complete forecast, A2

SPORTS



Hartselle, Brewer girls fall in regional tourneys

Brewer's girls fell in double overtime to defending Class 6A champion Homewood in Jacksonville, and Hartselle lost to 6A top-ranked Hazel Green in Hanceville. **B1**

COMING SUNDAY



Brookhaven students focus on self-esteem

The Ugly Duckling Society, a group of Brookhaven Middle School students hoping to help others with their self-esteem, will represent the school at the regional Destination Imagination tournament March 3 at Bob Jones High School in Huntsville.

Officials talk bridge across Alabama 20

The building of a bridge across Alabama 20 that allows traffic to exit to properties north and south of the busy and dangerous highway appears even more important than it was a decade ago, when Bass Pro first eyed the property.

AREA DEATHS

Ricky Bolding, Decatur
Doris Bunch, Athens
Minnie Chatman, Tennessee
Frank Finley, Decatur
Marilyn Gray, Elkmont
Betty Sue Harris, Decatur
Linda Hicks, Athens
Charles Jackson Sr., Decatur
Andy Light, Falkville
David Norton, Athens
Rickey Parker, Moulton
Kena Proctor, Trinity
Ollie Stovall, Courtland
Virginia Tubb, Somerville
Betty Wallace, Hartselle
Cecelia Williams, Decatur
Death notices, obits, **A5**

Abby A7
Business B4
Classified B5
Comics A6
Crossword A7
Editorials A4
Horoscope A7
Lotteries B3
Obituaries A5
Sports B1
Weather A2

Decatur, Alabama
106th year, No. 357
16 pages, 2 sections



ANIMAL CRUELTY CASE

Taylor takes the stand

Trial to resume Tuesday

By Michael Wetzel
Staff Writer

MOULTON — Former Lawrence County Animal Shelter Director Bobbie Taylor sobbed on the witness stand in Circuit Court on Friday afternoon while



Taylor

has been an animal advocate and has saved more than 50,000 animals.

telling the jury about seeing two mules beaten to death when she was 7 years old.

She said ever since then she

Taylor, 84, is on trial for 15 counts of animal cruelty stemming from a search of her property June 29, 2015, where she ran a temporary animal shelter for the county. The charges stem from the “substandard” conditions authorities said they found during the search.

Testimony by Moulton police and experts affiliated with the

American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals depicted Taylor as someone who was overwhelmed by the 316 dogs and cats at the shelter. They allege the animals were neglected, diseased, malnourished and lived in unsanitary conditions.

SEE TAYLOR, A3

AUSTIN HIGH SCHOOL

Behind-the-scenes players



Brady Dixon fills cups of water for players in a Class 6A boys semifinal against Muscle Shoals during the Northwest Regional tournament at Wallace State in Hanceville on Friday. Game story on B1. [CRYSTAL VANDER WEIT/DECATUR DAILY]

Student support staff critical for basketball team

By Deangelo McDaniel
Staff Writer

HANCEVILLE — Before every Austin High School basketball game, there is another game plan head coach Jake Miles knows nothing about. And he has learned not to question it.

The team's student support

staff gathers the night before each game to make sure filming equipment is ready, basketballs have the proper amount of air in them and uniforms are ready.

They also decide who will collect and wash uniforms and figure out when they will make highlight films for coaches to review.

Parker Liles, Caleb Douglas, Brady Dixon, Zach Morrison, Coby Abbott and Wesley Lowman did the same thing before Austin's Northwest Regional game with Muscle Shoals on Friday at Tom Drake Coliseum.

SEE PLAYERS, A3

'DESIRE TO KILL'

FBI drops ball on shooter tip

Agency says it failed to investigate reports on Florida suspect

By Kelli Kennedy, Curt Anderson
and Tamara Lush
The Associated Press

PARKLAND, Fla. — The FBI received a tip last month that the suspect in the Florida school shooting had a “desire to kill” and access to guns and could be plotting an attack, but agents failed to investigate, the

agency said Friday. Florida Gov. Rick Scott called for the FBI's director to resign because of the missteps.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions said the shooting that killed 17 people Wednesday was a “tragic consequence” of the FBI's failure and ordered a review of the Justice Department's processes. He said it's now clear that the nation's premier law enforcement agency missed warning signs.

In more evidence that there had been signs of trouble with

the suspect, Broward County Sheriff Scott Israel said at a Friday news conference that his office had received more than 20 calls about Nikolas Cruz in the past few years.

A person close to Cruz called the FBI's tip line on Jan. 5 and provided information about Cruz's weapons and his erratic behavior, including his disturbing social media posts. The caller was concerned that Cruz could attack a school.

SEE SHOOTER, A3

COUNSEL:

Russians meddled with 2016 election

By Eric Tucker
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In a historic indictment, the U.S. special counsel accused 13 Russians Friday of an elaborate plot to disrupt the 2016 presidential election, charging them with running a huge but hidden social media trolling campaign aimed in part at helping Republican Donald Trump defeat Democrat Hillary Clinton.

The federal indictment, brought by special counsel Robert Mueller, represents the most detailed allegations to date of illegal Russian meddling during the campaign that sent Trump to the White House. It also marks the first criminal charges against Russians believed to have secretly worked to influence the outcome.

The Russian organization was funded by Yevgeny Prigozhin, the indictment says. He is a wealthy St. Petersburg businessman and a member of President Vladimir Putin's inner circle.

Trump quickly claimed vindication Friday, noting in a tweet that the alleged interference efforts began in 2014 — “long before I announced that I would run for President.”

“The results of the election were not impacted. The Trump campaign did nothing wrong — no collusion!” he tweeted. But the indictment does not resolve the collusion question at the heart of the continuing Mueller probe, which before Friday had produced charges against four Trump associates. U.S. intelligence agencies have previously said the Russian government interfered to benefit Trump, including by orchestrating the hacking of Democratic emails, and Mueller has been assessing whether the campaign coordinated with the Kremlin.

SEE MEDDLED, A3



See More
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Section

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